



PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY BANKERS

THE VOICE FOR COMMUNITY BANKING IN PENNSYLVANIA SINCE 1876

March 3, 2009

Senate of Pennsylvania
Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Re: Co-Sponsorship of Senate Bank Robbery Initiative

Dear Senator:

On behalf of our Board of Directors and the 150 community banks PACB represents, I am writing to invite you to co-sponsor a Senate Bill a bill to toughen the penalties on bank robbers and attempted bank robbers. In just the **first three quarters of 2008** (the most recent timeframe in which FBI data is available), over **220 financial institutions in Pennsylvania were victims of bank robbery**. That means thousands of Pennsylvanians working for and patronizing financial institutions in the Commonwealth were at risk.

Our organization is working with Senator Waugh to develop legislation that would make robbery of a financial institution with a demand that does not contain a direct threat a Felony of the Second Degree. The demand by the perpetrator can be in the form of a spoken request or written note. Approximately **18% of bank robbers have been previously convicted in either federal or state court for bank robbery, bank burglary, or bank larceny**—we NEED to strengthen the PA bank robbery penalties to keep these repeat offenders off the streets!

Statistics from the FBI demonstrate that bank robberies in Pennsylvania are on the rise. Recent FBI statistics on bank crime list **Pennsylvania as third behind California and Texas in the number of bank robbery occurrences**. As a result of this frightening revelation, we believe it is time to increase the state penalties for this crime and work to make our financial institutions a safer place for customers and employees and their communities.

Bank robberies are traumatic events that foster a sense of fear in a community while hurting the area's economic vitality. This crime, which **occurs on average once every weekday**, affects communities across Pennsylvania, urban, suburban and rural. Please join Senator Waugh to co-sponsor a rational, sensible approach to this issue.

If you or your staff have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, Kristine Warner in my office, or Keith Clark of Shumaker Williams, P.C., our General Counsel.

Thanks so much.

Sincerely,

Frank A. Pinto
President/CEO

Cc: Sen. Mike Waugh
PACB Executive Committee
PACB Legislative Chair Ted Peters
PACB Legislative Vice-Chair Frank Godino